

NOTHING IN IT AS SENIOR CUP FINAL HEADS FOR A REPLAY

Slough Town 0,
Wycombe Wanderers 0
(after extra time)

IF Wycombe and Slough aren't sick of the sight of each other this season they certainly looked as though they were in Wednesday evening's intriguing Berks and Bucks Senior Cup final at Elm Park, Reading.

After 120 minutes, with nothing to show for their trouble but the need for a re-match, the rivals must continue their game of 'guess and gambit' at Marlow on Monday, May 10.

Perhaps then someone, somewhere can tip the balance by introducing a fresh approach to a clash between old rivals who know each other far too well.

HIGH INCENTIVES

The incentives are still high. Wycombe gather determination from the memory of their F.A. Cup replay defeat; Slough look

back on the 1968 final at Chesham when Wanderers last won the trophy by beating them in a closely-contested thriller.

Probably some names will have changed, though. For instance, Wycombe skipper and driving force, John Delaney, missed Wednesday's first match due to the cut above his right eye, suffered at Oxford the previous Thursday. But he should be fit and ready for the replay when his chance will come after all to break a long-standing jinx in county cup finals.

Honest effort from either team could not totally compensate for a desperate lack of inspiration and new ideas. So basic tactics inevitably played a more than sizeable part in the stalemate which unfolded before a

crowd of slightly under the 4,000 mark.

Wanderers had made the mistake of attempting to defend their way to victory over Slough in the F.A. Cup replay, and insisted on much the same approach again as the game began.

Goalkeeper John Maskell, as responsible as any for keeping Wanderers in the reckoning during a first half dominated by the Rebels, was called upon to clear his line more than once.

A surprise inclusion, who ran himself ragged to justify manager Brian Lee's faith in him, Geoff Anthony, presented the liveliest challenge to Slough's goalkeeper Ian Wolstenholme. The Welshman's back kick from Larry Pritchard's push pass gave the Rebels' defence a

moment's discomfort before flying across the goalface to safety.

HAPPY KEEPER

He also won Wycombe a corner in the 24th minute, with Wolstenholme glad to help the ball over the bar. And, with Pritchard continuing in the constructive form which has raised his game considerably in recent weeks, Wanderers came bouncing back towards half-time.

Defence hardly rated as the Blues' strong point on the night—a situation Slough had the chances to exploit, but didn't. Their classic miss came after 32 minutes, with Maskell drawn off his line and a fine cross from Ray Hill moving invitingly into the centre. But Roger Day, facing an open net, failed to balance himself in time, completely missing his connection with the ball.

The first signs that Wycombe had done all the covering they intended to do for one night, showed in the five minutes before the interval, when Slough's tight marking back row needed to call upon all their powers of concentration.

Wycombe resumed in more positive mood, and only what seemed like a piece of shirt tugging distracted Pritchard as he shot within seconds of the second half.

POOR IAN

Rundle, forlornly searching for the kind of outstanding form he has produced lately, cleared the Blues' line as John Connell sent the ball goalwards, and Terry Reardon—who'll have to be watched particularly closely again in the replay—saw a header flash just wide of the mark after 61 minutes.

But it was Wanderers' half, and the large contingent of supporters added a not inconsiderable touch of vocal encouragement.

Two features of Wednesday's match contrasted violently with the Cup meetings between the clubs this season. For Slough, a team struggling to find form in recent weeks, displayed a fluency and skill to their football that had been hidden against Wycombe on each previous occasion.

Thankfully, also, the game proved as cleanly contested as any this term—as opposed to the early season brawls. Only one major flare-up marred an otherwise sporting affair, when, eight minutes from full time, an incident grew between Gale and D'Arcy.

Wycombe played out time on a high note. Perhaps the most concerted offensive from any direction came in those closing minutes, during which Tony Horseman had a golden chance to win the game outright, but dallied too long when Slough's defence allowed him to work unchecked at close range.

But extra time had been predestined. Slough's team boss, Tommy Lawrence, opted to leave his substitute, Timmy Turl, on the bench, but the fourth minute saw Brian Lee make a tactical switch, with Bernie Bremer replacing Hutchinson.

This came only seconds after Dave Swain—another relatively quiet combatant—placed the ball into Wycombe's goal only to

Again Wycombe checked at first in what became a ragged 30 minutes, which looked like bringing a decision.

So, after 120 minutes of tanning, if not top brand, the destination of the Senior Cup remains a mystery to be unveiled—perhaps—replay at Marlow. For F. W. Lewis, President Berks and Bucks F.A., conceding it to either team—it's that close.

SLOUGH TOWN: I. Wolstenholme, S. Crosby, I. MPhee, K. M. D'Arcy, R. Hill, R. Day, J. D. Swain, J. Adams, T. F. Sub.: T. Turl (not used).

WYCOMBE WANDERERS: Maskell, P. Fuschillo, C. C. Powell, I. Rundle, V. Faulk, Anthony, J. Hutchinson (s. Bremer 92 mins.), K. See Pritchard, A. Horseman.

Referee: D. V. Reeves (Newham).

Official attendance: 3,794.



A Slough defender lifts the ball away from Tony Horseman on Wednesday.